

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 13142

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP (YOUNG, ANDREW)
SUBJECT: MEETING WITH MEMBERS OF OPPOSITION JAMAICA
LABOR PARTY (JLP).

1. SUMMARY: THE MEETING WITH THE PARLIAMENTARY OPPOSITION PARTY WAS ONE OF THE EARLY RECOMMENDATIONS OF FOREIGN MINISTER PATTERSON AS A NECESSARY PART OF AMBASSADOR YOUNG'S VISIT TO JAMAICA. PARTICIPANTS WERE EDDIE SEAGA, FORMER PRIME MINISTER HUGH SHEARER, AND CHAIRMAN OF THE PARTY, MR. FRANK PHIPPS. AMBASSADORS YOUNG AND IRVING AND MR. EINAUDI WERE THE U.S. PARTICIPANTS. THE 7:30 A.M. BREAKFAST MEETING WHICH WAS HELD ON AUGUST 6 WAS ORGANIZED AT THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE. SEAGA GAVE A DETAILED PRESENTATION OF THE POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE SURROUNDING LAST YEAR'S ELECTION AND THE STATE OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS PRESENTLY IN JAMAICA. HE LEVIED EXTREMELY HARSH, AND AT POINTS, BITTER CRITICISMS AT PRIME MINISTER MANLEY AND THE PNP, CENTERING HIS ATTACK ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT AND CASTRO'S CUBA. JAMAICA, HE SAID, WAS RAPIDLY HEADING IN THE DIRECTION OF MARXIST CUBA. AMBASSADOR YOUNG CENTERED HIS COMMENTS
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AROUND THE POSSIBILITIES OF COOPERATION BETWEEN MODERATE WING OF PNP AND JLP, NOTING THAT MANLEY SHOWED SIGNS OF SEEKING TO HOLD A MIDDLE COURSE. END SUMMARY.

2. SEAGA STATED THAT HE WAS PLEASED TO HAVE THIS AUDIENCE WITH AMBASSADOR YOUNG, FOR IT WAS IMPORTANT TO BE ABLE TO SPEAK FRANKLY ABOUT THE PATH THAT THE PNP HAD CHOSEN.

IN THE EARLY DAYS THE JLP AND THE PNP WORKED CLOSELY TOGETHER ALL FOR THE GOOD OF JAMAICA, BUT THE PRESENT LEADERSHIP OF THE PNP WAS HEADED ON A DISASTROUS COURSE THAT WAS REDUCING DEMOCRATIC SAFEGUARDS AND FURTHER WAS DRYING UP INVESTMENT. HE SAID THAT THE PNP HAD DEVELOPED CLOSE PARTY RELATIONS WITH THE CUBAN COMMUNIST PARTY AND WAS CLEARLY INTOXICATED WITH THE CUBAN EXAMPLE. THE PAST ELECTIONS WERE STOLEN AT THE POINT OF A GUN AND OTHER FORMS OF SHEER INTIMIDATION. THE JLP HAD DECIDED NOT TO PARTICIPATE IN ELECTIONS AGAIN UNLESS THERE WAS GENUINE ELECTION REFORM. PREDICTING THAT THE SAME ECONOMIC CRISIS THAT WAS APPARENT EARLIER IN 1977 WOULD REPEAT ITSELF IN EARLY '78, SEAGA PREDICTED CONTINUING RADICAL STRENGTH.

3. AMB. YOUNG SPOKE OF PAST COOPERATION BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES AND STATED THAT JAMAICA'S FUTURE PROBABLY DEPENDED UPON THE TWO PARTIES AGREEING TO A MIDDLE COURSE. HE FELT IT WAS THE CLEAR INTENTION OF THE GOVERNMENT FOR HIM TO BE EXPOSED TO THE YOUNGER AND RADICAL WING OF THE PNP, BUT ALSO THE GOVERNMENT HAD ENCOURAGED A MEETING WITH THE JLP. HE THOUGHT PRIME MINISTER MANLEY FELT THAT THESE POINTS OF VIEW WERE IMPORTANT TO BE ABLE TO CHART A MIDDLE COURSE OF ACTION, AND THAT IT MIGHT BE WORTH EXPLORING THE POSSIBILITIES OF BOTH PARTIES COOPERATING IN THE BUILDING OF A MIDDLE CONSENSUS FOR THE COUNTRY.

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4. JLP MEMBERS DOUBTED SUCH A POSSIBILITY AND CONTINUED WITH ESSENTIALLY POLITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE COUNTRY'S PRESENT PROBLEMS. THEY STRESSED THAT HUMAN RIGHTS NECESSARILY INCLUDED POLITICAL RIGHTS AND EXPRESSED FEAR FOR THE FUTURE OF JAMAICA. EMPHASIZED THAT AS THE U.S. PROCEEDED TOWARD NORMALIZING RELATIONS WITH CUBA IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT THE U.S. DISCUSS THE POLITICAL PRISONER ISSUE IN CUBA; TO DO OTHERWISE, SAID SEAGA, WOULD STRENGTHEN (RADICALIZATION?) THROUGHOUT THE CARIBBEAN.

5. HUGH SHEARER SAID THE PNP RADICALS OWED THEIR DOMINANCE OVER PNP MODERATES TO THEIR ABILITY TO DELIVER VOTES EVEN THOUGH MOST VOTERS PREFERRED CONCRETE MEASURES TO ADVANCE STANDARD OF LIVING. HE ALSO EXPRESSED APPRECIATION OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S POSITION ON ILLEGAL ALIENS. THE REPORTED POSITION WAS OF GREAT ASSISTANCE TO JAMAICANS IN THE U.S.

6. THE MEETING WAS GENERALLY CORDIAL, BUT THE BITTERNESS EXPRESSED BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES RAISES DOUBTS THAT RECONCILIATION MAY BE EXPECTED UNDER THE PRESENT LEADERSHIP. IN ADDITION, THE DEFEATIST TONE OF THE JLP LEADER-

SHIP -- WHICH BELIEVES THAT JAMAICA MUST RECEIVE OUTSIDE
SUPPORT FOR MODERATE POLICIES TO HAVE A CHANGE -- SEEMED
SO PRONOUNCED AND SO IDEOLOGICAL THAT IT PROBABLY CONTRI-
BUTES TO THE VERY LACK OF CONFIDENCE AND MALAISE IT
EMPHASIZES. LUCEY

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